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GENEVA CONFERENCE BULLETIN - X

Indochina discussions: The Communist delegations opened the Indochina phase of the Geneva conference with a strong bid to extend the negotiations to include Laos and Cambodia, as well as Vietnam. As the first step in this tactical line, the Viet Minh vice president devoted virtually his entire opening speech to a plea for invitations to the "resistance governments" of Laos and Cambodia. Chou En-lai supported this proposal, holding that the conference had the right to determine its own competition, and Molotov followed with the allegation that these "governments" controlled much of the territory of the two countries and proposed five power talks on the Viet Minh proposal.

In the second session on Indochina, the Viet Minh spokesman rejected the French proposal for halting the war and put forward a plan calling for a cease-fire throughout Indochina to be followed by a general political settlement which would include the following major points: French recognition of the sovereignty and independence of the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam," Khmer (Cambodia) and Pathet Lao; eventual withdrawal of all "foreign troops" from the three states; formation of advisory committees to carry out elections; and the establishment of unified governments in all three states.

These terms probably represent the Communists' maximum demands for a political settlement and were advanced primarily for the record and for use as a bargaining counter. The Viet Minh proposal, however, concluded with a provision which appeared designed to keep the door open for serious cease-fire negotiations. It suggested that a cease-fire might be arranged without complete agreement on the shape of a political settlement and included a provision vaguely resembling Bidault's demand for the grouping of regular units in zones of assembly. This approach is consistent with other indications that the Communists are seeking to induce France to accept a simple cease-fire agreement without political guarantees. Such an agreement would leave the Viet Minh in the most advantageous position to continue infiltration into Laos, Cambodia and non-Communist areas of Vietnam, and would also reduce the risk of possible American or United Nations intervention.

State Dept. review completed

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Swiss clarify decision to withdraw from NNRC: The Swiss are quite determined to withdraw from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea and hope the Geneva Conference will deal soon with that question, according to the American embassy in Bern. The Swiss foreign minister has given the following reasons for such a decision: (1) it is useless to prolong the life of the commission, (2) only two members are neutral, the other two are "mandatorys of some of the belligerents," and (3) under the Swiss militia system men cannot be ordered to Korea and since they do not want to volunteer for such duty it would soon become impossible to get people to fill the job.

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